



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Syma Ebbin, Representatives Karin Adams, Alicia T. Bauer, Portia Bordelon, Jordan Brayman, Clarence Casper, Kathy Chase, Bobbi Jo Cini, Mallory Doyle, Thomas Frickman, James Gustavson, Autumn Hanscom, Rosanne Kotowski, Brandon Marley, Douglas R. Marshall, Robert Martin, Jackie Massett, Bruce A. McDermott, Juan Melendez, Nancy Mello Miller, Roscoe Merritt, Doug Monaghan, Scott Newsome, Cutter Oliver, Richard Pasqualini, Sheila Perry, Shawn Powers, Carolann Quinn, Kate Richards, Reginald Stanford, Anni Rodgers, Judith Strode, Irma Streeter, James Streeter, Latisha Thompson, Patricia Wagner, Beverly Washington, Gary Welles, Michael Whitehouse, and Michael Whitney

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

Moderator Syma Ebbin called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher read the roll call.

A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Casper, Rep. Chase, Rep. Cini, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Martin, Rep. Massett, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Perry, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Richards, Rep. Stanford, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Strode, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles, Rep. Whitehouse and Rep. Whitney
Members Absent: Rep. Brayman, Rep. Marley, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Rogers, Rep. Streeter and Rep. Thompson

Moderator Ebbin stated that 34 members were present and a quorum was declared.

Also present were Town Manager John Burt, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Director Human Resources/Risk Management Robert Zagami, Superintendent of Schools Michael Graner, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Town Councilor Rachael Franco, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Deputy Town Clerk Dawn Rahilly.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Massett, seconded by Rep. Powers and so voted unanimously.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Jean Claude Ambroise, 169 Shennecossett Parkway, welcomed the new RTM members. He voiced his concern over a referendum petition currently being circulated and the deceptive way some of the petitioners are gathering signatures.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Ebbin stated that Reps. Brayman, McDermott, I. Streeter and Thompson notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

The Moderator mentioned she is looking for RTM Liaisons to serve on the Town Council, Board of Education, Economic Development Commission and the Golf Advisory Board. She requested any member interested in attending these meetings and reporting back to the RTM to please contact her.

Moderator Ebbin read the Town Council referral 2017-0301 Resolution Authorizing a Supplemental Appropriation to the Board of Education. She referred the matter to the Education Committee to report to the full RTM with its recommendation at the February 14, 2018 regular meeting.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Mr. Burt reported that the Preliminary Fund Balance as of June 30, 2017 (unaudited) is approximately \$10.9 million which is 9.1% of the FYE 2018 General Fund Adopted Budget. Final numbers for FYE 2017 will be available once all year-end journal entries have been posted. Two supplemental appropriations are pending RTM approval (\$350,000 to increase Contingency and \$1,568,239 increase to the Board of Education budget to meet minimum budget requirement) which will leave an unassigned Fund Balance of approximately \$8.9 million. The General Contingency for FYE 2018 was appropriated at \$650,000 with a current balance of \$344,376. He stated that approved and pending transfers are listed in the Town Manager News. The Capital Reserve Fund balance as of December 31, 2017 is estimated at \$1.2 million (unaudited) with one supplemental appropriation pending RTM approval (\$75,000 Town Hall Complex project).

2. Monthly briefing

Town Manager John Burt highlighted items from the Town Manager's Monthly News report. He gave an update on the Mystic Education Center stating that Groton has released request for proposals (RFP) and developers must submit proposals within 60 days of the release. He noted that there are a lot of developers interested in this project. He stated that at the Town Council Committee of the Whole meeting on January 23rd the audit will be presented, as well as a presentation on Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which is an important piece of Economic Development.

Responding to Rep. Massett, Mr. Burt explained Tax Increment Financing and urged Rep. Massett to attend the Committee of the Whole meeting to be held January 23rd when the consultants will give a full presentation.

G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

No report.

H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Graner reported that because of the designation of an Alliance District, Groton received a grant of \$600,000 for required services. He stated that the 2020 Plan is moving ahead. He stated that they are working with the architects and are finishing the pre-design phase. He stated that he may have an architect's rendering in a month or so. He reported that they had applied for, and received, a Federal grant called the Expect Grant. He stated that this is a \$4 million grant that will help expand Magnet Schools. He stated that Westside Middle School will become a STEM Magnet School and Cutler Middle School will become an Arts and Humanities Magnet School. He stated that both schools will offer an International Baccalaureate Middle Years program. He reported that the Education Cost Share Grant (ECS) was restored to \$24,898,950 which equates to about five-million dollars more than what was projected last June. He stated that the Council voted to appropriate funds in order to restore the budget to a zero percent reduction. He asked the Moderator if RTM action would be taken at the February meeting. Moderator Ebbin stated that the February meeting would be as soon as action could be taken. He stated his concerns with the delay in providing the remedial services that had been cut and are now waiting to be restored. Moderator Ebbin stated that the RTM may suspend the rules; it is their prerogative to do this as they had at their first meeting. Dr. Graner explained the difficulties that the district has encountered with the closing of Pleasant Valley School. He stated that they have provided space for eighty children at Charles Barnum School, but that they did not expand the special education staff. He stated that out of the measures

that the Alliance District has instructed, is to hire a special education teacher. He stated that they plan to hire an additional literacy specialist and math specialist so that there is one set for both Middle Schools. He stated that there is also some software that they plan to purchase.

In response to Rep. Newsome, Dr. Graner stated that at the next meeting he plans to provide a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that the Alliance District designation is based on what is called the District Accountability Index. He stated that there are eight measures to the Accountability Index, including the Language Arts scores for all students and separately for high needs students. High-needs students are children who receive free and reduced lunch, are English language learners, or are special education students. He stated that 44% of our children receive free or reduced lunch. He stated that this places Groton in a relatively high-needs district. He stated that we have a lot of high needs math and regular math, an issue with the four-year graduation rate, the six-year graduation rate, attendance, and chronic absenteeism. He stated that 15% of the students miss ten or more days in a year. He stated that based on this data, the State ranking order for the districts landed us at number 35. He stated that Groton will stay as an Alliance District for four years, with monthly assessments on the set measures. Dr. Graner stated that we were identified because the Alliance added three more school districts. Rep. Newsome stated that we will be required to fund Education at last year's level.

In response to Rep. Kotowski, Dr. Graner stated that the Town has a budget of about \$120 million, of which about \$76 million is for Education. He stated that the State provides funding to Districts based on their needs. The Town Council projected a \$5 million reduction in revenue from the State. He stated that the Education budget was reduced from \$76.5 million to \$74.9 million. Groton received \$25 million ECS grant, which was \$5 million more than they expected. He stated that of the additional \$5 million, the Town Council voted to restore about \$1.5 million, which means that \$3.5 million was left on the table. He stated that the Town Council put the \$3.5 million in the Reserve Fund.

In response to Rep. Whitehouse, Dr. Graner stated that our District Performance Index means that we are in the bottom 35 school districts, but within those 35 Districts there are other categories such as Priority Districts and Network Districts. He stated that the real story is that there are gradations to the Performance Index. He stated that for \$5 million, we will take the help and give that to the children. He stated that this distinction will stay for five years regardless of how well we do in the next year or two. Rep. Whitehouse stated that if the RTM waits until February to vote to restore this money, there will be a delay in help for the children.

Rep. Bordelon stated that Dr. Graner has used pockets of poverty to describe the reason for the Alliance District designation. She stated that the pockets of poverty that Dr. Graner speaks of have always been in Groton. She stated that we still have been able to educate our children without any problems. She stated that just because you are designated as having the need for free or reduced lunch, doesn't mean that your children necessarily would be consider high needs and that they are not performing above grade level in some areas. She stated her concern as to how the remedial needs will be met. Dr. Graner assured her that the District will address all needs and follow the guidelines necessary within the Alliance District. He stated that the term special needs is derived by the Federal Education Department and adopted throughout the State. He stated that free or reduce lunch is about a 50% factor in the District Performance Index.

Rep. Whitney stated that in his research he found that as a District we are worse than the state average in English Language Arts, absenteeism, but also physical fitness, college and career readiness, and college entrance. He stated that this was for all students, not just high need students. He stated that there are problems District wide. He stated that there was a big difference between Westside and Cutler and that he hopes it could get corrected through allocation of funds to Westside. He stated that the Town Council wants to appropriate \$1.56 million from the General Fund to the Board of Education in order to meet our Minimum Budget Requirement. Dr.

Graner stated that if we do not meet our Minimum Budget Requirement, dollar for dollar in next year's Education Cost Share Grant, the state will deduct two dollars for every one dollar that we cut, which equals to a 200% penalty.

Rep. Washington stated that she hopes the money that the school system get goes to the kids that need it most. She stated that the money should go to the students in the early grades because if we can give those kids a solid foundation like building a house, then they will hopefully do well in the upper grades. She stressed the importance of small class sizes. In response, Dr. Graner stated that all students will be allowed to go to the schools near where they live, but that there will be an opportunity to go to the other schools.

Rep. Pasqualini stated that he did not feel comfortable voting on this expenditure this evening because there are a number of questions unanswered.

Rep. Welles, stated that his question had been address by Rep. Bordelon. He stated his understanding that if this money is not approved now, it hurts the town. He stated that we will want to do this. Dr. Graner stated that we would reduce the revenue of the town. Rep. Welles stated that this is something that we will want to do regardless of how the money is spent. Dr. Graner stated that the Board has already identified where they would like the funding to go. He stated that it is almost dollar-for-dollar of what was cut last year.

In response to Rep. Cini, Dr. Graner stated that there are about 145-150 districts State-wide. He stated that the funds have been received by the Town. He stated that \$3.5 million would stay in the General Fund and \$1.5 million would go to the Board. Rep. Cini stated that the General Fund currently has \$8.5 million in it.

I. LIAISON REPORTS

No report.

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE - Chairman Washington

Chairman Washington reported on the meeting held on January 10, 2018. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's Office. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss and make a recommendation on a number of referrals. Referral 2017-0287 Supplemental Appropriation for Contingency. The recommendation failed in committee. Referral 2017-0288 Contingency Transfer for Wage Increases and Other Items was not acted upon because the first referral failed. Referral 2017-0289 Supplemental Appropriation for Town Hall Complex was recommended the full RTM approve the referral.

Moderator Ebbin called for acceptance of the report. Rep. Powers made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Rep. Whitehouse.

Rep. Newsome raised a Point of Order to allow discussion of the motion on the floor before a vote is taken. Moderator Ebbin accepted the Point of Order.

Rep. Whitehouse raised a Point of Order and asked if item 2017-0287 was on the agenda. He stated that it was not included on his. He was provided an updated agenda.

The motion to approve the report carried unanimously.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES -Chairman Oliver

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Whitney

No meeting, no report.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Mello Miller

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman J. Streeter

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Newsome

No meeting, no report.

7. TEMPORARY RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Monaghan

Rep. Monaghan read the minutes of the Temporary Rules & Procedures Committee meeting that was held on December 28, 2017. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's Office. He stated that the committee tweaked the rules and added one new rule, which is rule 3.1 to actually indicate that we voted to elect the Moderator. He stated that they removed the words debate after from a subsection under old 3.7 in order to clarify that when you Move the Question there is no debate after the motion is made. He stated that this is the point in moving the question. He stated that the old rules had a bunch of typos in terms of rule numbers. He enumerated the changes, which are included in the minutes of the meeting.

Rep. Newsome stated that the RTM needs to approve the meeting minutes.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Powers, seconded by Rep. Massett and so voted unanimously.

Rep. Monaghan explained the term liaison is a member who attends other meetings and gives a report the RTM on what happened at those meetings. Moderator Ebbin repeated the list of liaisons as Town Council, Board of Education, Golf Advisory Board, and Economic Development Commission.

NEW BUSINESS**2018-0010 Resolution Adopting Rules for the Thirty-First Representative Town Meeting****RESOLUTION ADOPTING RULES FOR THE THIRTY-FIRST REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING**

WHEREAS, the Temporary Rules & Procedures Committee has proposed that the following changes be made to the 30th RTM Rules:

(New) Rule 3.1 - The Moderator shall be elected by a majority vote of the RTM members present at the first meeting of the newly elected RTM and shall serve for a term of two (2) years.

(OLD) Rule 3.1 - amend to read In case of any disturbance or disorderly conduct with in the meeting hall, the Moderator shall have the power to order persons causing such disturbance to remove themselves or be removed and to be re-numbered as Rule 3.3

Rule 7.3 - strike Debate after from the title

Rule 8.1 - add as defined by Section 3.5.3 of the Town Charter at the end of the first sentence

Rule 4.1, Sec. 5, and Order of Business typographical errors to be corrected

Rule 3.556 re-numbered as 3.2 and change the word control to chair

Rule 3.445 and 3.667 move to Section 8 and be re-numbered as 8.6 and 8.7

Rule 3.778 be re-numbered as Rule 3.7

Rule 3.7.11 moved to General Section and be re-numbered as Rule 9.6

Rule 3.8 moved to Section 8 and be re-numbered as 8.8

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rules of the Thirty-first Representative Town Meeting as recommended by the Temporary Rules & Procedures Committee are hereby adopted.

A motion was made by Rep. Monaghan, seconded by Rep. Powers, that this matter be Adopted.

Rep. Marshall stated that the meeting agenda does not list all of the changes that were read by the Rep. Monaghan.

Moderator Ebbin pointed out a possible typographical error in section 6.5, which Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher so noted. The motion to adopt including the correction to section 6.5.3 carried unanimously.

The motion carried unanimously

Rep. Massett departed at 9:17 p.m. 33 members present.

Members Present: Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Casper, Rep. Chase, Rep. Cini, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marley, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Martin, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Perry, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Richards, Rep. Stanford, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Strode, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles, Rep. Whitehouse and Rep. Whitney
Members Absent: Rep. Brayman, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Rogers, Rep. Streeter and Rep. Thompson

2017-0287

Supplemental Appropriation for Contingency

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION TO CONTINGENCY

WHEREAS, the Town Charter provides for supplemental appropriations to the Adopted Budget, and

WHEREAS, during FYE 2018 budget deliberations, only the labor agreements for the CILU-Telecommunicators employees had been settled and those wage increases were included in a department's FYE 2018 Budget, and

WHEREAS, during FYE 2018 budget deliberations additional funding was included in the FYE 2018 Contingency function to partially cover the cost of undetermined wage/salary increases for the remaining employee groups; CILU-Clerical, United Steelworkers-Parks/Public Works, Police, AFSCME-Supervisors and Non-Union, and

WHEREAS, wage increases for three of those groups (CILU-Clerical, AFSCME-Supervisors, Non-Union) have been incorporated into a department's FYE 2018 budget through a General Contingency transfer, and

WHEREAS, wages increases for the Police are now known and should be incorporated into the department's FYE 2018 budget through a General Contingency transfer, and

WHEREAS, the current Contingency balance will be insufficient to cover wage increases and other unforeseen/unexpected expenses that may occur during the year, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$350,000 is appropriated from the General Fund unassigned fund balance to the Contingency function 1074 and referred to the RTM under Rule 6.5.3 for approval.

A motion was made by Rep. Washington, seconded by Rep. Whitehouse, that this matter be Adopted.

In response to Rep. Newsome, Rep. Washington stated that two committee members voted for the resolution, two members voted against, and one member abstained.

Rep. Kotowski stated that she did not support this item in committee due to the 8.7% tax increase that taxpayers had this year. She stated that no one should have received a raise in Groton this year. She stated that it is a misconception that contracts cannot be reopened. She stated that she works in a town where every union contract was reopened during the budget crisis, and all employees gave back to help the Town get through the State revenue decline. She stated that Groton is a culture of too much spending. She suggested that the employees should give concessions and then come back to the RTM.

Rep. Martin stated that he agrees with what Rep. Kotowski has said. He stated that we paid a tax

increase of 8.7% last year. He stated that he suspects the same thing this year, unless something changes. He stated that it is time to draw the line.

Rep. Massett stated that this money was set aside to accommodate these raises during last year's budget. She stated that this body cannot disapprove something that has already been approved or re-open contracts. She stated that if we start doing this we will have started down a very slippery slope. She stated that she understands that somehow, somehow we need to save money. She stated that labor contracts are legally binding and these contracts have been approved. She stated that if the issues is that people are making too much money, we can discuss that during the budget process.

Rep. Marshall raised a Point of Order to allow the Town Manager to answer questions.

Town Manager John Burt stated that he was not the Town Manager during the current budget deliberations, but that in any given year all of our contract have been coming up right about the same time. He stated that going into a budget, you really don't know what contracts will settle or whether contracts will go through the whole binding arbitration process. He stated that some money had been put into the Contingency Fund to cover some increases. He stated that it was known that additional funds would be needed and that the RTM would have to approve it.

Rep. Whitehouse stated that there is also a matter of the faith that employees have in their employer when they sign a contract. He asked members to imagine if their employer offered a raise and then told you that they changed their mind or that they were thinking about pulling back your raise. He stated that these are 2% cost of living, inflation based raises, which is less than the binding arbitration rate. He stated that it is the job of the RTM to discuss and deliberate on all issues, but it is not fair to seriously consider pulling back these raises. He stated that this was budgeted for and prepared for, so it seems fair to give them the raise that was negotiated.

In response to Rep. Richards, Director of Finance Cindy Landry stated that the Contingency Fund in the Fiscal Year 2018 budget started at \$650,000. She stated that this included some extra funding in anticipation of these contracts settling. She stated that we did not include what was anticipated to be the full amount. She stated that there had been a prior Contingency transfer of \$298,123 for other contracts that had settled earlier. She stated that the remaining balance in Contingency is \$344,376. She stated that these funds are for the CILU Clerical Union, ASFME Supervisors Union, and the Non-Union group.

Town Manager John Burt stated that this will leave a balance of in the Contingency Fund for emergencies such as snow plowing.

In response to Rep. J. Streeter, Ms. Landry stated that additional funding for any natural disaster would come from Contingency. She stated that if the funds are not spent, it will be transfer into the Fund Balance at year end. She stated that this request was made up to cover the wage increases and to allow for a cushion to cover unforeseen issues between now and June.

In response to Rep. Mello Miller, Ms. Landry stated that the Steelworkers contract remains open and is still in negotiations. She stated that this would be the final contract. She stated that if this contract is settled before June, she would hope that the funds in contingency could cover that.

Rep. Powers stated that if the body doesn't fund this, we will incur legal fees that will cost more money and the contract will be extended out. He stated that in the long run we would be spending more. Mr. Burt stated that the General Fund is our primary catch-all fund where most operations are funded. He stated that the Fund Balance is basically the difference between the assets and liabilities; how much the accounts are valued after expenses are taken from revenue. He stated that the Contingency Fund is funded to cover unexpected expenditures. He stated that we are only

half way through the year, so we need to fund the Contingency to get through the rest of the year.

In response to Rep. Newsome, Director of Human Resource Robert Zagami, stated that when we bargain, we bargain in good faith. He stated that they have negotiated a high deductible health plan with GMEA, AFSME, and the Police Unions. He stated that you can ask a union to come back to the table, but you can't make them. He stated that it is important to have great workers and provide a fair day's wage for a fair day's work.

In response to Rep. Marshall's question, that considering all of the concession, are they effectively getting less? Mr. Zagami stated that employees are not getting less, but you also do not want to ruin employee relations or get the word out that Groton is not a good place to work.

In response to Rep. Cini, Ms. Landry stated that the Contingency Fund was budgeted for \$650,000 and that the request is for an additional \$350,000. Mr. Zagami mentioned that the retirees will be able to maintain their same health insurance for this year, but the following year they will have the high deductible health plan. He stated that there are five people in the Supervisor Union, forty-six people in the Steelworker Union, about fifty or sixty people in the GMEA Union, and about seventy people in the Police Union. Rep. Cini stated that this money is for about 160 people. She stated that this includes funds for the Steelworker's contract that has not been settled.

In response to Rep. Bordelon, Ms. Landry stated that they did realize that the money set aside in the 2018 Budget would not be sufficient to cover all of the unions. She stated that they made a budgetary decision to use a compromise number in hope that they wouldn't need to ask for more. She stated that the most contracts expire at about the same time, but the amount of time for negotiations vary.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Monaghan, seconded by Rep. Whitehouse.

The vote to MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION carried 30 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 abstention. IN FAVOR: Reps. Adams, Bauer, Bordelon, Chase, Cini, Doyle, Ebbin, Frickman, Gustavson, Hanscom, Marshall, Martin, Melendez, Mello Miller, Merritt, Monaghan, Oliver, Pasqualini, Perry, Powers, Quinn, Richards, Stanford, J. Streeter, Strode, Wagner, Washington, Welles, Whitehouse, Whitney. OPPOSED: Reps. Kotowski and Newsome. ABSTAINING: Rep. Casper.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 32 - Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Casper, Rep. Chase, Rep. Cini, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Martin, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Perry, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Richards, Rep. Stanford, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Strode, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles, Rep. Whitehouse and Rep. Whitney
Opposed: 1 - Rep. Kotowski

2017-0288

Contingency Transfer for Wage Increases and Other Items

RESOLUTION FOR FYE 2018 GENERAL CONTINGENCY TRANSFERS

WHEREAS, the Town Charter provides for General Contingency transfers during the year, and

WHEREAS, during FYE 2018 budget deliberations, only the labor agreements for the CILU-Telecommunicators employees had been settled and those wage increases were included in a department's FYE 2018 Budget,

WHEREAS, during FYE 2018 budget deliberations, labor agreements/pay plans were not known and were not included in a department's budget for the remaining employee groups; CILU-Clerical, United Steelworkers-Parks/Public Works, Police, AFSCME-Supervisors and Non-Union, and

WHEREAS, wage increases for Police are now known and should be incorporated into a department's FYE 2018 budget through a General Contingency transfer, and

WHEREAS, the retirement of the former Town Manager resulted in additional expenses in Function 1010, Executive Management, and

WHEREAS, during budget deliberations funds were included in the General Contingency in anticipation of wage adjustments occurring during the fiscal year for a total Contingency appropriation of \$650,000, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$415,052 is transferred from the General Fund Contingency function (#1074) to the following General Fund departments/functions and referred to the RTM 6.5.3 for approval:

TRANSFERS FROM CONTINGENCY TO FUNCTIONS

Function	Department	TOTAL
1001	Legislative Policy	\$ 32
1003	Voter Registration	\$ 503
1005	Town Clerk	\$ 3,940
1010	Executive Management	\$ 63,650
1011	Information Technology	\$ 5,878
1013	Finance	\$ 12,655
1024	Public Safety	\$ 271,589
1035	Public Works	\$ 10,030
1046	Planning & Development	\$ 9,650
1051	Human Services	\$ 9,052
1063	Library	\$ 18,637
1064	Parks & Recreation	\$ 9,436
	Total	\$ 415,052

A motion was made by Rep. Washington, seconded by Rep. Whitehouse, that this matter be Adopted.

In response to Rep. Mello Miller's question about the anticipation of the Town Manager's retirement, Director of Finance Cindy Landry stated that when the budget was put together it was not known that the Town Manager was planning to retire. Ms. Landry stated that we do not have a policy to budget for anticipated retirements.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, Ms. Landry stated that if the Town was to have any savings for the health insurance it would not be shown in the Department budgets. She stated that this would be seen in contributions under Non-Departmental budgets and reflected in the following year. Rep. Pasqualini stated that he has been through ten budgets and there has always been a contingency plan. He stated that he has complained for that last four years the Contingency Fund seems to be used as a piggy bank, as things over-ride we go to the Contingency. He stated that the Contingency Fund was meant to be used for a bad year of snow, an explosion somewhere, or some other emergency. He stated that it is not intended to cover project overruns. He stated that originally the contingency started at \$350,000 and with these requests, we need almost a million dollars. She stated that this is a problem. Ms. Landry mentioned that if we do have cost savings, the funds would not flow back to Contingency, it would flow into the unreserved Fund Balance. She stated that when she performs the net of operations at the end of the year, she will present the impact on the Fund Balance. She stated that this is where you would see the increase.

In response to Rep. Chase, Ms. Landry stated that \$350,000 is being transferred from the General Fund Balance to increase the amount in the Contingency account. She stated that the second resolution is a request for \$415,000 to be transferred in order to cover the wage increases that had

already been approved. She stated that they want to leave some amount for a cushion, in case of some unforeseen emergency.

In response to Rep. Washington, Ms. Landry stated that the balance in the Contingency Fund prior to the \$350,000 transfer, was \$344,000. She stated that if the RTM approves the transfer of the \$350,000 and she will take out \$415,000, and then there will be a balance of about \$279,000.

In response to Rep. Cini, Ms. Landry stated that the union contracts are legal obligations and we have to pay the employees. She stated that the Departments would be overdrawn at the year end in order to pay the employees and noted in the audit. She stated that this is not a good budgeting practice.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Monaghan, seconded by Rep. J. Streeter.

The vote on the MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was 30 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention. IN FAVOR: Reps. Adams, Bauer, Bordelon, Casper, Chase, Cini, Doyle, Ebbin, Frickman, Gustavson, Hanscom, Martin, Melendez, Mello Miller, Merritt, Monaghan, Oliver, Pasqualini, Perry, Powers, Quinn, Richards, Stanford, J. Streeter, Strode, Wagner, Washington, Welles, Whitehouse and Whitney. OPPOSED: Reps. Kotowski and Newsome. ABSTAINING: Rep. Marshall.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 31 - Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Casper, Rep. Chase, Rep. Cini, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Martin, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Perry, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Richards, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Strode, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles, Rep. Whitehouse and Rep. Whitney
Opposed: 1 - Rep. Kotowski
Abstain: 1 - Rep. Stanford

2017-0289

Supplemental Appropriation for Town Hall Complex

RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATION FOR TOWN HALL COMPLEX PROJECT IN THE FYE 2018 CAPITAL BUDGET FROM CAPITAL RESERVE FUND BALANCE

WHEREAS, a project was approved in the FYE 18 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) entitled "6) C) Town Hall Complex" to complete the third phase of a multiple phased project to prepare the Fitch Middle School for reuse; and

WHEREAS, the Public Works Department received six bids on Thursday, November 9th for the work and there is insufficient funding (to include a construction contingency) to award the lowest base bid; and

WHEREAS, in order for the project to proceed, additional funding in the amount of \$75,000 (including a 10% construction contingency) must be appropriated; and

WHEREAS, the Finance Director has determined that there are sufficient funds in the fund balance of the Capital Reserve Fund; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the FYE 2018 CIP project 6) C) Town Hall Complex be increased by an additional appropriation of \$75,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund's fund balance.

Refer to RTM 6.5.3

A motion was made by Rep. Washington, seconded by Rep. Powers, that this matter be Adopted.

In response to Rep. Mello Miller, Public Works Director Gary Schneider stated that this is the

third and final phase to occupy wings B, C, and D. He stated that wing A is the two-story building that you see from Fort Hill Road, and B, C, and D are the one-story sections of the building. Mr. Schneider provided a hand-out with an illustration of the building. Mr. Schneider stated that two phases have already been approved by the Town Council and RTM. He stated that the first phase was to repair the roof on wing A; the second phase was to install the sprinkler system for \$300,000. He stated that there was a savings of about \$50,000 from this project, which will be returned to the Capital Reserve Fund. He stated that this phase will accomplish three projects, restore fire walls, egress doors for handicapped access, handicapped parking spaces, and toilets in B, C, and D wings for handicapped accessibility. These projects will allow the Fire Marshal to authorize the use of wings B, C, and D. He stated that the intention is to move the Parks and Recreation programs from the William Seely School to Fitch Middle School. He stated that the William Seely School will be moth balled, leaving minimal maintenance and expense. He stated that this is the last phase in order to occupy the building. He stated that if the main two-story building is occupied, we will have to go through some of the same modifications. He stated that the boilers in the building will need to be replaced in the future. He stated that there had been a study of the building three years ago that approached a figure of \$15 million to use the building for office space. He stated that the cost for maintaining wing A is for heating to prevent mold and mildew and to prevent the paint and plaster from deterioration. He stated that the Parks and Recreation Department is currently using the main gym. Rep. Miller Mellow raised a concern regarding ADA compliance. In response, Mr. Schneider stated that the gym is being used in accordance to how the Board of Education had used the gym.

In response to Rep. Bordelon stating that Groton schools have recently tested positive for lead in the water, Mr. Schneider stated that the water had not been tested in any of the public buildings. He stated that he will contact the Health District to inquire if a survey of all town buildings should be conducted. He stated that Groton Utilities supplies the water. Rep. Bordelon stated encouragement to continue using this building and expressed the need for a recreation center.

In response to Rep. Whitehouse, Mr. Schneider stated that William Seely School is operating on only one boiler, and it is near failing. He stated that the roof needs replacement, but the leaks are under control. Town Manager John Burt stated that they had a commercial developer lined up that had an approved contract to market this property. He stated that there are several options available for this property. He stated that they could easily market this property for residential use, but they are trying to develop it as multi-use, which will take a little more time. He stated that if we lose Fitch for our Parks and Recreation programs, we will have to fix William Seely and lose the ability to sell it.

Rep. Whitney stated that he fully supports bringing this building up to code and he noted that the requested additional funds were anticipated last year. He stated that \$300,000 was not going to be enough to support the construction plus contingency. He stated his concern with the room to accommodate current programs being offered at the William Seely School. Mr. Schneider gave assurance that there would be plenty of space in the cafeteria and a couple of large classrooms to accommodate. Mr. Schneider stated that the parking lot has been determined to have enough space for the intended use. Mr. Schneider stated that this project is expected to be completed by June.

In response to Rep. Washington, Mr. Schneider stated that the work that is being done is all required for the code and should be good for the next five to ten years.

Rep. Melendez pointed out that the cafeteria in the illustration is actually the kitchen and that the cafeteria is right next to the kitchen. Mr. Schneider accepted the correction.

Rep. Pasquilini stated that there is \$50,000 left over from the last phase. He asked if the Town Council could reappropriate that money to use in the third phase. He questioned the contingency

that is not covered by the bond. Mr. Schneider stated that over the years the definition of Capital Improvement Projects has become very detailed. He stated that the projects are put out to bid and then the projects are closed out. The Town policy is strict and when a project is closed out you need to ask for new authorization for funds. He stated that \$50,000 was not expended in the second phase project and it will be returned to the Capital Projects Fund. He stated that an authorization for a new appropriation is the best practice. He stated that the contingency is needed as protection for unforeseen issues, as the contractor works on the project. He stated that they may need more piping for the toilets or other code items not identified such as an additional fire horn.

In response to Rep. Mello Miller, Mr. Schneider stated that no work will be completed at the William Seely school. He stated that we will not be fined for using a facility that is not in compliance with code.

Rep. Kotowski stated that she loves children and she has children, but she did not support this transfer in committee because she thinks that the Town should have reprioritized their other projects to accommodate the increase in cost. She stated that if this project is a Town priority then another project should not have been funded. She stated that we can not have everything and we cannot do everything. She stated that after an 8.7% tax increase, there should be no additional spending. She added that she sees Fitch Middle school as a never ending CIP project.

Rep. Casper stated that he keeps hearing this number of 8.7% increase in taxes. He stated that his calculation of the fiscal year 2017 the budget was \$121.6 million and fiscal year 2018 the budget was \$118.9 million, which is a 2.2% reduction in taxes. He stated that budget equals taxes. He stated that some people get confused with mill rate. He reminded the body of the recent re-evaluation, which reduced the grand list. He stated that the amount of taxes raised is still that number. He stated that the way to get the mill rate is to divide the grand list by what you need. He stated that the actual taxes went down 2.2%.

Rep. Newsome requested that the RTM hold off until another meeting to discuss taxes. He stated that we could go a whole night on just that alone. In response to Rep. Mello Miller, he stated that State regulations allow the use of a school without upgrades to the codes as long as you maintain some kind of educational purpose and the school is being used on a day to day basis. He stated that this policy has applied to all of the schools that we have been using for other purposes. He stated that this is not really an issue.

In response to Rep. Cini, Mr. Schneider stated that if the appropriation is not approved, we will not be able to use Fitch Middle School. He stated that the heat will remain on. He stated that the funds were expended for a partial new roof and sprinkler and fire alarm systems. The school will not be used. He explained that if the William Seely school is sold, the programs held there need to go somewhere or they will stop. He stated that if William Seely isn't sold, he will need funds to maintain the building. He recommended moving the recreation programs to Fitch Middle School and put William Seely into cold storage.

A MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. J. Streeter, seconded by Rep. Powers.

The vote to MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION carried 32 in favor, 1 opposed. IN FAVOR: Reps. Adams, Bauer, Bordelon, Casper, Chase, Cini, Doyle, Ebbin, Frickman, Gustavson, Hanscom, Marshall, Martin, Melendez, Mello Miller, Merritt, Monaghan, Newsome, Oliver, Pasqualini, Perry, Powers, Quinn, Richards, Stanford, J. Streeter, Strode, Wagner, Washinton, Welles, Whitehouse and Whitney. OPPOSED: Rep. Kotowski.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 32 - Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Casper, Rep. Chase, Rep. Cini, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Martin, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Perry, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Richards, Rep. Stanford, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Strode, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles, Rep. Whitehouse and Rep. Whitney
Opposed: 1 - Rep. Kotowski

K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

None.

L. OTHER BUSINESS

Suspension of the Rules

A motion to suspend the rules to allow discussion and vote on referral 2017-0301 Resolution authorizing a supplemental appropriation to Board of Education was made by Rep. Whitehouse, seconded by Rep. Melendez.

Rep. Newsome stated Suspension of the Rules is not debateable.

The vote by ROLL CALL to Suspend the Rules carried 22 in favor, 11 opposed. IN FAVOR: Reps. Bordelon, Casper, Ebbin, Frickman, Gustavson, Marshall, Martin, Melendez, Mello Miller, Merritt, Monaghan, Oliver, Perry, Powers, Richards, J. Streeter, Strode, Wagner, Washington, Welles, Whitehouse and Whitney. OPPOSED: Reps. Adams, Bauer, Chase, Cini, Doyle, Hanscom, Kotowski, Newsome, Pasqualini, Quinn and Stanford.

Rep. Kotowski departed at 10:20 p.m. 32 Members present.

Members Present: Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Casper, Rep. Chase, Rep. Cini, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Martin, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Perry, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Richards, Rep. Stanford, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Strode, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles, Rep. Whitehouse and Rep. Whitney
Members Absent: Rep. Brayman, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Marley, Rep. Massett, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Rogers, Rep. Streeter and Rep. Thompson

2017-0301 Supplemental Appropriation to Board of Education

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION TO BOARD OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the Board of Education FYE 2018 appropriation was reduced due to proposed cuts to the State Education Cost Sharing grant, and

WHEREAS, Groton was designated as an Alliance District by the State Department of Education as of July 1, 2017 and this designation continues for five years to FYE 2022, and

WHEREAS, an Alliance District designation requires that Education funding cannot be reduced for fiscal years ending June 30, 2018 and June 30, 2019, and

WHEREAS, Connecticut State Department of Education has determined the 2017-2018 minimum budget requirement (MBR) calculation is the FYE 2017 budgeted appropriation of \$76,468,239, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$1,568,239 is appropriated from the General Fund unassigned fund balance to the Board of Education function 1080 to meet the minimum budget requirement (MBR) and referred to the RTM for approval.

A motion was made by Rep. Whitehouse, seconded by Rep. Melendez, that this matter be Adopted.

Rep. Whitehouse read the motion and moved for acceptance, seconded by Rep. Melendez.

Rep. Bordelon stated that she is concerned with how the money will be spent. She stated that she wanted more concrete examples of how were are not going to get to this point again, as in cutting remedial help. She stated that children have been without remedial services since the start of the school year. She stated that before the services were cut, we were already lacking services. She stated that she would like to know why we are an Alliance District and what we are doing to change that designation. She stated that the Education budget will be returned to what was budgeted last year, yet a school closed. She stated that there should be extra money due to the school closure. She mentioned that the District hired a Communication Coordinator and an Assistant Transportation Coordinator, while remedial support services were cut. She stated that she wants to support this funding, but she wants assurance that the most vulnerable students will benefit.

Dr. Graner stated he was not prepared for this action to be voted on tonight and that he did not bring the Board's recommended list of expenditures. He stated that the Board cannot make recommendation until the money is allocated. He stated that the Education Budget was cut by \$2.85 million, so significant adjustments had to be made. He stated that the closing of the elementary school was only a saving of \$1.3 million, so they had to find an additional \$1.5 million in cuts. He stated that the paraprofessional account was under funded by \$600,000. He stated that when children are identified as needing special education services, this information is written into their educational plans. He stated that from September 2017, we have had a \$750,000 deficit in this account. He stated that he recommends fully funding the paraprofessional accounts, hiring a literacy specialist, a math specialist, a special education teacher, a half-time special education teacher for elementary school, and a literacy specialist for elementary school. He stated that \$136,000 was cut from site budgets, which is money that the schools use for materials. He stated that he would restore this funding. He stated that the district-wide field trips would be restored for \$49,000, educational software for \$53,000, textbook accounts, and laptop computers for elementary teachers would be funded. He stated that the total for these expenditures would amount to \$1,568,239. He stated that the Board has only identified the personnel expenditures and that it will review the items that he has identified. He stated that he greatly appreciated this consideration and if it is granted, he suspects that the Board would vote immediately on these expenditures. He stated that if the RTM approved this tonight, he will make the appointments tomorrow.

In response to Rep. Bordelon, Dr. Graner stated that we have remedial support, tutors, an entire special education department and 196 paraprofessionals that provide remedial support. He stated that this is really the foundation.

Moderator Ebbin made the request to the RTM membership to retain comments to one question.

Rep. Newsome called for a Point of Order stating that we have a question on the floor. He stated that discussion is to be pertinent to whether or not we should spend this money. He stated that the Board of Education meetings is the place to hammer out all of these particular things. He stated that the Superintendent can spend the money however he sees fit, per State Statute. He stated that we are not here to dictate what he spends money on. He restated the question on the floor.

Rep. Bordelon stated that she believes she was cut off, and that her only question was what are we going to do different. She stated that they are voting on restoring funds which is pertaining to the situation. She stated that her question is simply how are we going to do this differently when we are at the same fork in the road.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, Dr. Graner stated that the funding for last year's Education was to the minimum budget requirement. He stated that we cannot turn down the State Alliance District designation. He stated that the State will be funding \$600,000 this year for the Alliance District designation. He stated that the \$600,000 will not be counted toward our MBR. He stated that this

money will be used for software and professional training.

Rep. Marshall asked the RTM to put this to vote and let that vote decide how this concludes this evening. He stated that if it does not pass, the we will have plenty of time for this to go to committee. He stated that he would like to see us vote because of the late hour.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Marshall, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote by ROLL CALL on the MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION carried 28 in favor, 4 opposed. IN FAVOR: Reps. Adams, Bauer, Bordelon, Casper, Chase, Cini, Doyle, Gustavson, Hanscom, Marshall, Martin, Melendez, Mello Miller, Merritt, Monaghan, Newsome, Oliver, Pasqualini, Perry, Powers, Quinn, Richards, Stanford, J. Streeter, Strode, Wagner, Washington and Welles. OPPOSED: Reps. Ebbin, Frickman, Whitehouse and Whitney.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 31 - Moderator Ebbin, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Bordelon, Rep. Casper, Rep. Chase, Rep. Doyle, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gustavson, Rep. Hanscom, Rep. Marshall, Rep. Martin, Rep. Mello Miller, Rep. Melendez, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Monaghan, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Oliver, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Perry, Rep. Powers, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Richards, Rep. Stanford, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Strode, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Washington, Rep. Welles, Rep. Whitehouse and Rep. Whitney
Opposed: 1 - Rep. Cini

M. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Rep. Pasqualini, seconded by Rep. Whitney and so voted unanimously. Moderator Ebbin adjourned the meeting at 10:39 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Dawn G. Rahilly, Deputy Town Clerk